

# Bitter poison

The National Poison Centre's helpline rang 22,000 times last year with enquiries from doctors and emergency services faced with patients — mostly children — who had accidentally swallowed harmful household chemicals. So the centre's consultant, Dr John Henry, welcomes the pioneering decision by supermarket chain Tesco to incorporate Bitrex — “the bitterest substance known to man”, according to the *Guinness Books of Records* — in a wide range of own-label household products from loo cleaner to nail polish remover, “making them taste so totally unpleasant they're likely to be spat out before they can do much harm”. But Dr Henry believes there is more to be done. “My dream is to see every potentially harmful chemical sold in child-proof containers,” he says.

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